

February 13, 2013

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) and five other members of Congress wrote to Secretary Ken Salazar of the U.S. Department of the Interior and Acting Secretary Rebecca Blank of the U.S. Department of Commerce, urging both agencies to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of alternative proposals for the San Francisco and San Joaquin Bay-Delta region and California's water needs.

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) already initiated a cost-benefit analysis of the current flawed proposal for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). In order to make best use of the state's water resources and taxpayer dollars, it is imperative that alternative proposals be given equal consideration so that an accurate comparison can be made.

"To arbitrarily begin a huge project that will affect the wallets and lives of millions of Californians without considering every viable alternative would be irresponsible, risky, and a disservice to the taxpayers who will ultimately foot the bill. The current proposal does not reflect the opinions and interests of the people in northern California and taxpayers throughout the state. In particular, it doesn't consider the five million people in the Delta region, who would be devastated by the Governor's proposal. To destroy one area of California and deprive people of the water resources that they desperately need is completely unacceptable," said Rep. McNerney.

Congressman McNerney authored the following letter to the Department of the Interior and Department of Commerce. Reps. Miller, Thompson, Matsui, Garamendi, and Bera cosigned the letter.

"It is crucial that a wide range of stakeholders be heard when a project of such great significance to California taxpayers and the health of the Bay Delta is considered," said Rep. Miller. "Options other than the Governor's preferred alternative must be considered for cost benefit analysis as part of a comprehensive approach to finding a balanced use for California's fresh water. Simply put, a project of this magnitude and far-reaching impact should not be undertaken if alternate proposals which reflect the needs of Bay Delta communities and of the State do not receive diligent analysis. "

“A cost-benefit analysis is an important step in the Bay Delta Conservation Plan process. However, we need to make sure the state also analyzes the alternatives that have been developed by water and environmental experts in addition to the Governor’s preferred proposal. In order to make a successful decision for the future of the Bay-Delta, all options should be analyzed and the decision must be based on the best available science,” said Rep. Thompson.

“I remain extremely concerned about the direction that the state is moving with the BDCP. A cost-benefit analysis is necessary to ensure that policy makers and all Californians have a full understanding of the true cost of the project, however that cost-benefit analysis must include all the alternatives, not just the alternative that the exporters support. Since the beginning of the process, I have long advocated for an incremental approach that begins with a 3,000 cfs intake project, and I believe that approach, along with other measures, should be studied. If we leave viable options off the table we are not serving the best interest of the public,” said Rep. Matsui.

“The narrow focus of the state’s current BDCP cost-benefit analysis reminds me of the Ford Model T, which could be painted any color that a customer wanted – so long as it was black. If you don’t look at an adequate range of options, how can you say you’ve picked the best one? You can’t,” said Rep. Garamendi. “The current proposal also doesn’t add a single drop of water. The plan simply transfers water southward, threatening massive ecological and economic degradation of the Sacramento River and the entire Delta. Instead of this tunnel vision, California needs a comprehensive science-driven water policy that respects water rights and prioritizes five key elements: water conservation, recycling, and storage, environmental restoration, and levee improvements.”

“Water supply and availability has long been an issue affecting California and Sacramento County in particular,” said Congressman Bera. “It is critical for our health and well-being, for our environment, and for our wallets that a variety of plans be considered to improve water supplies before a decision is reached. I hope that the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Commerce will consider conducting a cost-benefit analysis on a number of plans so that we can better understand all the options that are available.”

The text of the letter is below and attached [here](#) .

February 13, 2013

The Hon. Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington DC

The Hon. Rebecca Blank
Secretary
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Salazar and Acting Secretary Blank:

It is our understanding that the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) has initiated a cost-benefit analysis of the Governor's preferred proposal for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). While we are pleased that CNRA has finally agreed to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of BDCP alternatives, we are disappointed that you continue to ignore the needs of Bay-Delta communities, and the entire state, by failing to analyze other alternative proposals.

Your Departments should consider conducting a cost-benefit analysis on a number of alternatives that have been released or discussed among California water experts, including a recent Natural Resources Defense Council proposal and an alternative that includes no tunnel conveyance system.

We believe California's taxpayers, small business owners, farmers, and families deserve the best information possible and to know exactly how much a plan will cost before it is implemented. Analyzing only the State's preferred alternative, which is estimated to cost upwards of \$18 billion and affect water reliability for the entire state, is irresponsible and further illustrates yet again that the broader concerns and needs of the Bay-Delta region are being left out of the discussion.

A project of such historic significance will cost the taxpayers an astronomical sum and should not be rushed through the required public review process without thoroughly examining all options, and their potential costs and ultimate impacts. We should work together to create the best plan for the entire state, one that protects the Delta while also meeting the coequal goals of Delta ecosystem restoration and a more reliable water supply for the entire State of California. By studying a variety of plans, we can facilitate a more collaborative and comprehensive

approach to our state's needs.

We can all agree that inaction is not an option for the long-term viability of the Delta region and California's water reliability. As we have mentioned in previous letters, meetings, and correspondence, a poorly-designed plan would cause catastrophic disruptions to the state water supply. There is too much at stake in the BDCP for California to move forward with a massive project without analyzing all of the options and considering the voices of all stakeholders. We strongly encourage you to include these proposals in the cost-benefit analysis as you move forward in the process.